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# The Singing Leaves

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*Ezra Pound, in "A Lume Spento."*

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**Josephine Preston Peabody**

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THE SINGING MAN.

THE PIPER.

THE BOOK OF THE LITTLE PAST, Illustrated in color.

THE SINGING LEAVES.

MARLOWE: A DRAMA.

FORTUNE AND MEN'S EYES.

OLD GREEK FOLK STORIES.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

# THE SINGING MAN



# The Singing Man

## A Book of Songs and Shadows ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

By JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY



*BOSTON and NEW YORK*  
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY  
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1911

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## FOREWORD

We make our songs as we must, from fragments of the joy and sorrow of living. What Life itself may be, we cannot know till all men share the chance to know.

Until the day of some more equal portion, there is no human brightness unhaunted by this black shadow : the thought of those unnumbered who pay all the heavier cost of life, to live and die without knowledge that there is any Joy of Living.

No song could face such blackness, but for the will to share, and for hope of the day of sharing.

Upon that hope and that mindfulness, the poems in this book are linked together.

J. P. M.

4 October, 1911.



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THE SINGING MAN  
AN ODE OF THE PORTION OF LABOR

*‘The profit of the Earth is for all.’*

— ECCLESIASTES.



## THE SINGING MAN

### I

**H**E sang above the vineyards of the world.  
And after him the vines with woven  
hands

Clambered and clung, and everywhere unfurled  
Triumphing green above the barren lands ;  
Till high as gardens grow, he climbed, he stood,  
Sun-crowned with life and strength, and sing-  
ing toil,  
And looked upon his work ; and it was good :  
The corn, the wine, the oil.

He sang above the noon. The topmost cleft  
That grudged him footing on the mountain  
scars

He planted and despaired not ; till he left  
His vines soft breathing to the host of stars.  
He wrought, he tilled ; and even as he sang,  
The creatures of his planting laughed to scorn  
The ancient threat of deserts where there sprang  
The wine, the oil, the corn !

## 4 THE SINGING MAN

He sang not for abundance. — Over-lords  
Took of his tilth. Yet was there still to reap,  
The portion of his labor ; dear rewards  
Of sunlit day, and bread, and human sleep.  
He sang for strength ; for glory of the light.  
He dreamed above the furrows, ‘They are  
mine !’

When all he wrought stood fair before his sight  
With corn, and oil, and wine.

*Truly, the light is sweet  
Yea, and a pleasant thing  
It is to see the Sun.  
And that a man should eat  
His bread that he hath won ; —  
(So is it sung and said),  
That he should take and keep,  
After his laboring,  
The portion of his labor in his bread,  
His bread that he hath won ;  
Yea, and in quiet sleep,  
When all is done.*

He sang ; above the burden and the heat,  
Above all seasons with their fitful grace ;  
Above the chance and change that led his feet  
To this last ambush of the Market-place.



THE SINGING MAN 5

‘Enough for him,’ they said — and still they  
say —

‘A crust, with air to breathe, and sun to  
shine ;

He asks no more !’ — Before they took away  
The corn, the oil, the wine.

He sang. No more he sings now, anywhere.

Light was enough, before he was undone.

They knew it well, who took away the air,

— Who took away the sun ;

Who took, to serve their soul-devouring greed,

Himself, his breath, his bread — the goad of  
toil ; —

Who have and hold, before the eyes of Need,

The corn, the wine, — the oil !

*Truly, one thing is sweet*

*Of things beneath the Sun ;*

*This, that a man should earn his bread and eat,*

*Rejoicing in his work which he hath done.*

*What shall be sung or said*

*Of desolate deceit,*

*When others take his bread ;*

*His and his children’s bread ? —*

*And the laborer hath none.*

## 6 THE SINGING MAN

*This, for his portion now, of all that he hath done.*

*He earns ; and others eat.*

*He starves ; — they sit at meat*

*Who have taken away the Sun.*

### II

Seek him now, that singing Man.

Look for him,

Look for him

In the mills,

In the mines ;

Where the very daylight pines, —

He, who once did walk the hills !

You shall find him, if you scan

Shapes all unbefitting Man,

Bodies warped, and faces dim.

In the mines ; in the mills

Where the ceaseless thunder fills

Spaces of the human brain

Till all thought is turned to pain.

Where the skirl of wheel on wheel,

Grinding him who is their tool,

Makes the shattered senses reel

To the numbness of the fool.

Perisht thought, and halting tongue —

(Once it spoke ; — once it sung !)  
 Live to hunger, dead to song.  
 Only heart-beats loud with wrong  
 Hammer on, — *How long ?*  
 . . . *How long ? — How long ?*

Search for him ;  
 Search for him ;  
 Where the crazy atoms swim  
 Up the fiery furnace-blast.  
 You shall find him, at the last, —  
 He whose forehead braved the sun, —  
 Wreckt and tortured and undone.  
 Where no breath across the heat  
 Whispers him that life was sweet ;  
 But the sparkles mock and flare,  
 Scattering up the crooked air.  
 (Blackened with that bitter mirk, —  
 Would God know His handiwork ?)

Thought is not for such as he ;  
 Naught but strength, and misery ;  
 Since, for just the bite and sup,  
 Life must needs be swallowed up.  
 Only, reeling up the sky,  
 Hurtling flames that hurry by,

## 8 THE SINGING MAN

Gasp and flare, with *Why*—*Why*,  
. . . *Why?* . . .

Why the human mind of him  
Shrinks, and falters and is dim  
When he tries to make it out :  
What the torture is about. —  
Why he breathes, a fugitive  
Whom the World forbids to live.  
Why he earned for his abode,  
Habitation of the toad !  
Why his fevered day by day  
Will not serve to drive away  
Horror that must always haunt : —  
. . . *Want* . . . *Want!*  
Nightmare shot with waking pangs ; —  
Tightening coil, and certain fangs,  
Close and closer, always nigh . . .  
. . . *Why?* . . . *Why?*

Why he labors under ban  
That denies him for a man.  
Why his utmost drop of blood  
Buys for him no human good ;  
Why his utmost urge of strength  
Only lets Them starve at length ; —

Will not let him starve alone;  
He must watch, and see his own  
Fade and fail, and starve, and die.

. . . . .  
    . . . *Why?* . . . *Why?*  
    . . . . .

Heart-beats, in a hammering song,  
Heavy as an ox may plod,  
Goaded — goaded — faint with wrong,  
Cry unto some ghost of God  
    . . . *How long?* . . . *How long?*  
    . . . . . *How long?*

### III

Seek him yet. Search for him !  
You shall find him, spent and grim ;  
In the prisons, where we pen  
These unsightly shards of men.  
Sheltered fast ;  
Housed at length ;  
Clothed and fed, no matter how ! —  
Where the householders, aghast,  
Measure in his broken strength  
Nought but power for evil, now.  
Beast-of-burden drudgeries

## 10 THE SINGING MAN

Could not earn him what was his :  
He who heard the world applaud  
Glories seized by force and fraud,  
He must break, — he must take ! —  
Both for hate and hunger's sake.  
He must seize by fraud and force ;  
He must strike, without remorse !  
Seize he might ; but never keep.  
Strike, his once ! — Behold him here.  
(Human life we buy so cheap,  
Who should know we held it dear ?)

No denial, — no defence  
From a brain bereft of sense,  
Any more than penitence.  
But the heart-beats now, that plod  
Goaded — goaded — dumb with wrong,  
Ask not even a ghost of God  
. . . . . *How long ?*

*When the Sea gives up its dead,  
Prison caverns, yield instead  
This, rejected and despised ;  
This, the Soiled and Sacrificed !  
Without form or comeliness ;  
Shamed for us that did transgress ;*

## THE SINGING MAN II

*Bruised, for our iniquities,  
With the stripes that are all his !  
Face that wreckage, you who can.  
It was once the Singing Man.*

### IV

Must it be ? — Must we then  
Render back to God again  
This His broken work, this thing,  
For His man that once did sing ?  
Will not all our wonders do ?  
Gifts we stored the ages through,  
(Trusting that He had forgot) —  
Gifts the Lord required not ?

Would the all-but-human serve !  
Monsters made of stone and nerve ;  
Towers to threaten and defy  
Curse or blessing of the sky ;  
Shafts that blot the stars with smoke ;  
Lightnings harnessed under yoke ;  
Sea-things, air-things, wrought with steel,  
That may smite, and fly, and feel !  
Oceans calling each to each ;  
Hostile hearts, with kindred speech.

## 12 THE SINGING MAN

Every work that Titans can ;  
Every marvel : save a man,  
Who might rule without a sword. —  
Is a man more precious, Lord?

Can it be? — Must we then  
Render back to Thee again  
Million, million wasted men?  
Men, of flickering human breath,  
Only made for life and death?

Ah, but see the sovereign Few,  
Highly favored, that remain !  
These, the glorious residue,  
Of the cherished race of Cain.  
These, the magnates of the age,  
High above the human wage,  
Who have numbered and possesst  
All the portion of the rest !

What are all despairs and shames,  
What the mean, forgotten names  
Of the thousand more or less,  
For one surfeit of success ?

For those dullest lives we spent,  
Take these Few magnificent !



For that host of blotted ones,  
 Take these glittering central suns.  
 Few ;— but how their lustre thrives  
 On the million broken lives !  
 Splendid, over dark and doubt,  
 For a million souls gone out !  
 These, the holders of our hoard, —  
     Wilt thou not accept them, Lord ?

V

Oh, in the wakening thunders of the heart,  
 — The small lost Eden, troubled through the  
     night,  
 Sounds there not now, — forboded and apart,  
     Some voice and sword of light ?  
 Some voice and portent of a dawn to break ? —  
     Searching like God, the ruinous human shard  
 Of that lost Brother-man Himself did make,  
     And Man himself hath marred ?

It sounds ! — And may the anguish of that  
     birth  
     Seize on the world ; and may all shelters fail,  
 Till we behold new Heaven and new Earth  
     Through the rent Temple-vail !

## 14 THE SINGING MAN

When the high-tides that threaten near and far  
To sweep away our guilt before the sky, —  
Flooding the waste of this dishonored Star,  
Cleanse, and o'erwhelm, and cry! —

Cry, from the deep of world-accusing waves,  
With longing more than all since Light  
began,  
Above the nations, — underneath the graves, —  
'Give back the Singing Man!'

## THE TREES

### I

NOW, in the thousandth year,  
When April's near,  
Now comes it that the great ones of  
the earth

Take all their mirth  
Away with them, far off, to orchard-places, —  
Nor they nor Solomon arrayed like these, —  
To sun themselves at ease ;  
To breathe of wind-swept spaces ;  
To see some miracle of leafy graces ; —  
To catch the out-flowing rapture of the trees.  
Considering the lilies.

— Yes. And when  
Shall they consider Men ?

*(O showering May-clad tree,  
Bear yet awhile with me.)*

## II

For now at last, they have beheld the trees.  
Lo, even these! —  
The men of sounding laughter and low fears;  
The women of light laughter, and no tears;  
The great ones of the town.  
And those, of most renown,  
That once sold doves, — now grown so penny-  
wise  
To bargain with forlorn merchandise, —  
They buy and sell, they buy and sell again,  
The life-long toil of men.  
Worn with their market strife to dispossess  
The blind, — the fatherless,  
They too go forth, to breathe of budding trees,  
And woods with beckoning wonders new unfurled.  
Yes, even these:  
The money-changers and the Pharisees;  
The rulers of the darkness of this world.

*(O choiring Summer tree,  
Bear yet awhile with me.)*

## III

For now, behold their heart's desire is thrall  
To simpleness. — O new delight, unguessed,  
In very rest !  
And precious beyond all,  
A garden-place, a garden with a wall!  
To the green earth ! All bountiful to bless  
Hearts sickening with excess.  
To the green earth, whose blithe replenishments  
Shall fresh the jaded sense !  
To the green earth, the dust-corrupted soul  
Returns to be made whole.  
For now it comes indeed,  
They will go forth, all they, to see a reed  
So shaken by the wind.  
Men are no longer blind  
To aught, save human kind.

*(O mellowing August tree,  
Bear yet awhile with me.)*

## IV

The wonder this. For some there are no trees ;  
Or in the trees no beauty and no mirth :—

## 18 THE SINGING MAN

Those dullest millions, pent  
 In life-long banishment  
 From all the gifts and creatures of the earth,  
 Shut in the inner darkness of the town ;  
 Those blighted things you see,  
 But the Sun sees not, at its going down : —  
 Warped outcasts of some human forestry ;  
 Blind victims of the blind,  
 Wreckt ones and dark of mind,  
 With the poor fruit, after their piteous kind.  
 And if you take some Old One to the fields,  
 To see what Nature yields  
 With fullest hands to men already free,  
 It well may be,  
 As on some indecipherable book  
 The Guest will look,  
 With eyes too old, — too old, too dim to  
                   see ;  
 Too old, too old to learn ;  
 Or to discern —  
 Before it slips away,  
 The joy of such a late half-holiday !  
 Proffer those starved eyes your belated cup :  
 They look not up.  
 Too late, too late for any sky to do  
 Brief kindness with its blue.

And what behold they, then?  
In the shamed moment, when  
Old eyes bow down again?

*Down in the night and blackness of the heart,  
The drowned things start.  
And he recks nothing of the meadow air,  
Because of what is There.  
Lost things of hope and sorrow without tongue:  
The human lilies, sprung  
Out of the ooze, and trodden,  
Even as they breathed and clung!  
Lost lilies, bruised and sodden;  
Lost faces, gleaming there,  
Where misery blasphemes the sacred young!  
Mute outcry, most, of those  
Small suffering hands defrauded of their rose;  
Faces the daylight shuns;  
Ruinous faces of the little ones, —  
Pale witness, unaware.  
Starved lips, and withering blood —  
O broken in the bud! —  
Blank eyes, and blighted hair.*

(O golden, golden tree!  
Bear yet awhile with me.)

## 20 THE SINGING MAN

So is it, haply, when  
Dull eyes look up, and then  
Dull eyes look down again.  
Waste no vain holiday on such as these;  
For them there is no joy in blossomed trees.

### V

For them there is no joy in blossomed trees.  
And with what eye-shut ease  
We leave them, at the last, for company,  
The Tree,  
Whose two stark boughs no springtime yet unfurled,  
Ever, since time began;  
Nor bloom so strange to see! —  
Behold, the Man,  
With His two arms outstretched to fold the  
world.





O, do you remember? — How it came to be?  
 Far, golden windows gazing from the shore;  
 Golden ebb of daylight; heart could hold no more :  
 Belovèd and Belovèd, and the sea.

Westward the sun, — low, slow and golden;  
 Eastward the moon climbed, honey-pale.  
 O do you remember? while our eyes were holden,  
 Close, close upon us, — the Golden Sail?  
 Wind-swift she came, — thing of living flame,  
 Sea-breathing Glory, to make the heart afraid!  
 The ripples, fold on fold  
 Of coiling gold,  
 Trailing a thousand ways  
 Her golden maze,  
 Rocked in a golden tumult, every one,  
 The gondolas, the ships . .  
 Westward she made . . . . .  
 A portent from the sky, — gone by, gone by,  
 To golden, far eclipse; . . .  
 Into the Sun.

Behold, a mystery  
 That shook to golden throbbing all the sea.  
 Oh, and what needed one more wonder be  
 For thee and me, Belovèd? thee and me?





## RICH MAN, POOR MAN

*'Rich man, Poor man, Beggar man, Thief,  
Doctor, Lawyer, Merchant, Chief.'*

### I

**H**IGHWAY, stretched along the sun,  
Highway, thronged till day is done;  
Where the drifting Face replaces

Wave on wave on wave of faces,

And you count them, one by one:

*'Rich man — Poor man — Beggar man —  
Thief:*

*Doctor — Lawyer — Merchant — Chief.'*

Is it soothsay? — Is it fun?

Young ones, like as wave and wave;

Old ones, like as grave and grave;

Tide on tide of human faces

With what human undertow!

Rich man, poor man, beggar-man, thief! —

Tell me of the eddying spaces,

## 24 THE SINGING MAN

Show me where the lost ones go ;  
Like and lost, as leaf and leaf.  
What's your secret grim refrain  
Back and forth and back again,  
Once, and now, and always so ?  
Three days since, and who was Thief?  
Three days more, and who 'll be Chief?  
Oh, is that beyond belief,  
*Doctor, Lawyer — Merchant-Chief?*

*(Down, like grass before the mowing ;  
On, like wind in its mad going : —  
Wind and dust forever blowing.)*

Highway, shrill with murderous pride,  
Highway, of the swarming tide !  
Why should my way lead me deeper?  
I am not my Brother's keeper.

## II

Byway, ambushed with the dark,  
Byway, where the ears may hark ;  
Live and fierce when day is done,  
You, that do without the Sun : —  
What 's this game you bring to nought? —

Muttering like a thing distraught,  
 Reckoning like a simpleton?  
 (Since the hearing must be brief, —  
 Living or a dying thief!)  
 Cobbled with the anguished stones  
 That the thoroughfare disowns;  
 Stones they gave you for your bread  
 Of the disinherited!  
 Where the Towers of Hunger loom,  
 Crowding in the dregs of doom;  
 Where the lost sky peering through  
 Sees no more the grudging grass, —  
 Only this mud-mirrored blue,  
 Like some shattered looking-glass.

*(Under, with the sorry reaping!  
 Underneath the stones of weeping,  
 For the Dark to have in keeping.)*

Byway, you, so foully marred;  
 You, whose sodden walls and scarred,  
 See no light, but only where  
 Fevered lamps are set to stare  
 In the eyes of such despair!  
 Tell me — as a Byway can —  
 Was this Beggar once a Man?

## 26 THE SINGING MAN

*'Rich man — Poor man — Beggar man — Thief!'*

Like and lost as leaf and leaf.

Stammering out your wrongs and shames,

Must you cry their very names?

Must you sob your shame, your grief?

— *'Poor man — Poor man! — Beggar — Thief.'*

### III

Highway, where the Sun is wide ;

Byway, where the lost ones hide,

Byway, where the Soul must hark,

Byway, dreadful with the Dark :

Can you nothing do with Man?

Doctor, Lawyer, Merchant, Chief,

Learns he nothing, even of grief?

Must it still be all his wonder

Some men soar, while some go under?

He has heard, and he has seen :

Make him know the thing you mean.

He has prayed since time began, —

He's so curious of the Plan !

He will pray you till he die,

For the Whence and for the Why ;

Mad for wisdom — when 't is cheaper !

RICH MAN, POOR MAN 27

*'Why should my way lead me deeper?  
Am I, then, my Brother's keeper?'*

Show him, Byway, if you can;  
Lest he end as he began,  
Rich and poor, — this beggar, Man.







*But we did walk in Eden,  
Eden, the garden of God ; —  
There, where no beckoning wonder  
Of all the paths we trod,  
No choiring sun-filled vineyard,  
No voice of stream or bird,  
But was some radiant oracle  
And flaming with the Word !*

*Mine ears are dim with voices ;  
Mine eyes yet strive to see  
The black things here to wonder at,  
The mirth, — the misery.  
Beloved, who wert with me there,  
How came these shames to be ? —  
On what lost star are we ?*

*Men say : The paths of gladness  
By men were never trod ! —  
But we have walked in Eden,  
Eden, the garden of God.*





## THE FOUNDLING

**B**EAUTIFUL Mother, I have toiled all  
day ;  
And I am wearied. And the day is done.  
Now, while the wild brooks run  
Soft by the furrows — fading, gold to gray,  
Their laughter turned to musing — ah, let me  
Hide here my face at thine unheeding knee,  
Beautiful Mother ; if I be thy son.

The birds fly low. Gulls, starlings, hoverers,  
Along the meadows and the paling foam,  
All wings of thine that roam  
Fly down, fly down. One reedy murmur blurs  
The silence of the earth ; and from the warm  
Face of the field the upward savors swarm  
Into the darkness. And the herds are home.

All they are stalled and folded for their rest,  
The creatures : cloud-fleece young that  
leap and veer ;  
Mad-mane and gentle ear ;  
And breath of loving-kindness. And that best,—

## 32 THE SINGING MAN

O shaggy house-mate, watching me from far,  
With human-aching heart, as I a star —  
Tempest of plumèd joys, just to be near !

So close, so like, so dear ; and whom I love  
More than thou lovest them, or lovest me.  
So beautiful to see,  
Ah, and to touch ! When those far lights above  
Scorch me with farness — lights that call and  
call  
To the far heart, and answer not at all ;  
Save that they will not let the darkness be.

And what am I ? That I alone of these  
Make me most glad at noon ? That I  
should mark  
The after-glow go dark ?  
This hour to sing — but never have — heart's-  
ease !  
That when the sorrowing winds fly low, and  
croon  
Outside our happy windows their old rune,  
Beautiful Mother, I must wake, and hark ?  
Who am I ? Why for me this iron *Must* ?  
Burden the moon-white ox would never bear ;  
Load that he cannot share,

He, thine imperial hostage of the dust.  
 Else should I look to see the god's surprise  
 Flow from his great unscornful, lovely eyes —  
 The ox thou gavest to partake my care.

Yea, all they bear their yoke of sun-filled hours.  
 I, lord at noon, at nightfall no more free,  
 Take on more heavily  
 The yoke of hid, intolerable Powers.  
 — Then pushes here, in my forgetful hand,  
 This near one's breathless plea to understand.  
 Starward I look ; he, even so, at me !

And she who shines within my house, my sight  
 Of the heart's eyes, my hearth-glow, and  
 my rain,  
 My singing's one refrain —  
 Are there for her no tidings from the height ?  
 For her, my solace, likewise lost and far,  
 Islanded with me here, on this lone star  
 Washed by the ceaseless tides of dark and  
 light.

What shall it profit, that I built for her  
 A little wayside shelter from the stark  
 Sky that we hear, and mark ?

## 34 THE SINGING MAN

Lo, in her eyes all dreams that ever were !  
And cheek-to-cheek with me she shares the  
quest,  
Her heart, as mine for her, sole tented rest  
From light to light of day ; from dark —  
till Dark.

Yea, but for her, how should I greatly care  
Whither and whence? But that the dark  
should blast  
Our bright! To hold her fast, —  
Yet feel this dread creep gray along the air.  
To know I cannot hold her so my own,  
But under surge of joy, the surges moan  
That threaten us with parting at the last !

Beautiful Mother, I am not thy son.  
I know from echoes far behind the sky.  
I know; I know not why.  
Even from thy golden, wide oblivion:  
Thy careless leave to help thy harvesting,  
Thy leave to work a little, live, and sing;  
Thy leave to suffer — yea, to sing and die,  
Beautiful Mother ! . . .

Ah, Whose child am I ?



*Love sang to me. And I went down the stair,  
And out into the darkness and the dew ;  
And bowed myself unto the little grass,  
And the blind herbs, and the unshapen dust  
Of earth without a face. So let me be.*

*For as I hear, the singing makes of me  
My own desire, and momentarily I grow.  
Yea, all the while with hands of melody,  
The singing makes me, out of what I was,  
Even as a potter shaping Eden clay.*

*Ever Love sings, and saith in words that sing,  
' Beloved, thus art thou ; and even so  
Lovely art thou, Beloved ! ' — Even so,  
As the Sea weaves her path before the light,  
I hear, I hear, and I am glorified.*

*Love sang to me, and I am glorified  
Because of some commandment in the stars.  
And I shall grow in favour and in shining,  
Till at the last I am all-beautiful ;  
Beautiful, for the day Love sings no more.*







## THE FEASTER

O H, who will hush that cry outside the  
doors,

While we are glad within?

Go forth, go forth, all you my servitors;

(And gather close, my kin.)

Go out to her. Tell her we keep a feast, —

Lost Loveliness who will not sit her down

Though we implore.

It is her silence binds me unreleased,

It is her silence that no flute can drown,

It is her moonlit silence at the door,

Wide as the whiteness, but a fire on high

That frights my heart with an immortal Cry,

Calling me evermore.

Louder, you viols;—louder, O my harp;

Let me not hear her voice;

And drown her keener silence, silver-sharp,

With waves of golden noise!

For she is wise as Eden, even mute,

To search my spirit through the deep and  
height

Again, again.

### 38 THE SINGING MAN

Outpierce her with your singing, dawnlike flute ;  
And you, gloom over, viols of the night  
With colors lost in umber, — with sweet  
pain  
Of richest world's desire, — prevail, sing down  
All memory with pleading, so you drown  
Her merciless refrain !

Oh, can you not with music, nor with din,  
Save me the stress and stir  
In my lone spirit, throned among my kin,  
From that same voice of her? —  
The never ending query she hath had  
Only to wake my Soul, and only then  
Wake it to weep?  
With ' *Why?* ' and ' *Art thou happy? Art thou  
glad?*  
*And hast thou fellowship with fellow-men?*  
So, through my mirth and underneath my  
sleep ;  
Her voice, — abysmal hunger unfulfilled ; —  
The calling, calling, never to be stilled, —  
Calling of deep to deep.'

But I have that shall fill this wound of mine,  
Since Loveliness must be ; —

Since Loveliness must save us, or we pine  
And perish utterly.  
All that the years have left us, undismayed  
Of age or death; and happier fair than truth,  
— When truth is fair !  
Shapes of immortal sweetness, to persuade  
Iron and fire and marble to their youth ;  
Wild graces trapped from the three kingdoms'  
lair  
Of wildest Beauty ; shadow and smile and  
hush ;  
— Fleet color, of a daybreak, of a blush,  
For my sad soul to wear !

Let April fade ! For me, unfading bloom ! . . .  
The little fruitless seed  
Deep sown of fire within the midmost gloom,  
A sterner fire to feed : —  
The rainbow, frozen in a lasting dew ;  
Green-gazing emerald, fresh as grass beneath  
The placid rose.  
Fair pearl, and you, fair pearl, and you and  
you,  
Rained from the moon, and kissing in a  
wreath,  
As moment unto eager moment goes !

## 40 THE SINGING MAN

Look back at me, you sapphires blue and  
wise

With farthest twilight, blue resplendent eyes  
That never weep, nor close.

O house me, glories ! Give me house and home  
Here for my homelessness.

Set forth for me the wine, the honeycomb  
Whereto desire saith ' Yes ! '

O Senses, weave me from all lovely dust  
Some home-array, some fair familiar garb  
For me, exiled.

Charm me some rare anointment I may trust  
Against her query, searching like a barb  
The dumbness of a heart unreconciled.

Clothe me with silver ; fold me from dismay ;  
Save me from pity. For I hear her say,  
' Alas, Alas, poor child ! '

' Alas, Alas, thou lost poor child, how long ?  
Why wilt thou suffer want ?

Why must I hear thy weeping through thy song,  
And see thine eyes grow gaunt ?

Making sad feast upon the crumbs of light  
Shed long ago from heavenly highways where  
Thy brethren are !

And thy heart smoulders in thee, to be bright,  
 Thy one sole refuge from thy one despair,  
 Fraying the thwarted body with a scar.  
 How long, before thine eyelids, desolate,  
 How long shall this thy dark dominion wait  
 For thee, belated Star?'





*Belovèd, if the Moon could weep,  
Or if the Sun could see  
How all these weltering alleys keep  
Their outcast treasury!*

*O bitter, bitter-sweet! —  
Beauty of babyhood, —  
Earth's wistful uttermost of good  
Flung out upon the street;  
Fouled, even as the highways would,  
With mirk and mire and bruise;  
The cheek more petal-fine  
Than rose before a shrine!  
Those hands like star-fish in the ooze,  
And fingers fain to cling  
To any stronger thing!  
And smiles, for one triumphal Gift,  
Should one lean down, and lift!  
And tendril hair; — O in such wise,  
With wild lights aureoled,  
The morning-glories twine and bold,  
In some far paradise!*

*Oh well and deep, the foul ways keep  
Lost treasure hid from day! —  
Sun may not see: but only we,  
Who look; and look away.*







## THE GOLDEN SHOES

**T**HE winds are lashing on the sea ;  
The roads are blind with storm.  
And it 's far and far away with me ;  
So bide you there, stay warm.  
It 's forth I must, and forth to-day ;  
And I have no path to choose.  
The highway hill, it is my way still. —  
Give me my golden shoes.

*God gave them me on that first day  
I knew that I was young.  
And I looked far forth, from west to north ;  
And I heard the Songs unsung.*

This cloak is worn too threadbare thin,  
But ah, how weatherwise !  
This girdle serves to bind it in ;  
What heed of wondering eyes ? —  
And yet beside, I wear one pride  
— Too bright, think you, to use ? —  
That I must wear, and still keep fair. —  
Give here my golden shoes.

## 46 THE SINGING MAN

*God gave them me, on that first day  
I heard the Stars all chime.  
And I looked forth far, from road to star ;  
And I knew it was far to climb.*

They would buy me house and hearth, no doubt,  
And the mirth to spend and share ;  
Could I sell that gift, and go without,  
Or wear — what neighbors wear.  
But take my staff, my purse, my scrip ;  
For I have one thing to choose.  
For you, — Godspeed ! May you soothe your  
need.  
For me, my golden shoes !

*He gave them me, that far, first day  
When I heard all Songs unsung.  
And I looked far forth, from west to north.  
God saw that I was young !*

## NOON AT PÆSTUM

**L**ORD of the Sea, we sun-filled creatures  
raise  
Our hands among the clamorous  
weeds, — we too.

Lord of the Sun, and of the upper blue,  
Of all To-morrow, and all yesterdays,  
Here, where the thousand broken names and  
ways

Of worship are but shards we wandered  
through,

There is no gift to offer, or undo ;  
There is no prayer left in us, only praise.

Only to glory in this glory here,  
Through the dead smoke of myriad sacri-  
fice ;—

To look through these blue spaces, blind and  
clear

Even as the seaward gaze of Homer's eyes ;  
And from uplifted heart, and cup, to pour  
Wine to the Unknown God. — We ask no more.

## VESTAL FLAME

**L**IGHT, light, — the last :  
Till the night be done,  
Keep the watch for stars and sun, and  
eyelids over-cast.

Once there seemed a sky,  
Brooding over men.  
Now no stars have come again, since their bright  
good-bye!

Once my dreams were wise.  
Now I nothing know;  
Fasting and the dark have so put out my heart's  
eyes.

But thy golden breath  
Burns against my cheek.  
I can feel and love, and seek all the rune it  
saith.

Do not thou be spent,  
Holy thing of fire, —  
Only hope of heart's desire dulled with wonder-  
ment!

While there bide these two  
 Hands to bar the wind ;  
 Though such fingers chill and thinned, shed  
           no roses through.

While this body bends  
 Only for thy guard ;  
 Like a tower, to ward and worship all the light  
           it sends.

It is not for fear  
 Lest there ring some cry  
 On the midnight, ' Rise and come. Lo, the  
           Bridegroom near !'

It is not for pride,  
 To be shining fair  
 In a wedding-garment there, lighting home the  
           Bride.

It is not to win  
 Love, for hoarded toil,  
 From those poor, with their spent oil, weeping,  
           ' Light us in !' —

No ; but in despite  
 Of all vigils set,  
 Do I bind me to thee yet, — strangest thing of  
           Light !

50 THE SINGING MAN

Only, all, for thee  
Whatsoe'er thou art,  
Smiling through the blinded heart, things it  
cannot see.

Very Soul's Desire,  
Take my life ; and live  
By the rapture thine doth give, ecstasy of fire !

Hold thy golden breath !  
For I feel, — not hear—  
Spent with joy and fear to lose thee, all the  
song it saith.

Light, light, my own :  
Do not thou disown  
Thy poor keeper-of-the-light, for Light's sake  
alone.



*The dark had left no speech save hand-in-hand  
Between us two the while, with others near.  
Mine questioned thine with 'Why should I be  
here?'*

*'Yet bide thou here,' said thine, 'and understand.'*

*And mine was mute; but strove not then to go;  
And hid itself, and murmured, 'Do not bear  
The listening in my heart!' Said thine, 'My Dear,  
I will not bear it, ever. But I know.'*

*Said mine to thine: 'Let be. Now will I go!—  
For you are saying,—you who do not speak,  
This hand-in-band is one day cheek-to-cheek!'  
And said thy hand around me, 'Even so.'*

*Then mine to thine.—'Yea, I have been alone;  
—Yet happy.—This is strange. This is not I!  
You hold me, but you can not tell me why.'  
And said thy hand to mine again, 'My Own.'*







## THE PROPHET

**A**LL day long he kept the sheep :—  
Far and early, from the crowd,  
On the hills from steep to steep,  
Where the silence cried aloud ;  
And the shadow of the cloud  
Wrapt him in a noonday sleep.

Where he dipped the water's cool,  
Filling boyish hands from thence,  
Something breathed across the pool  
Stir of sweet enlightenments ;  
And he drank, with thirsty sense,  
Till his heart was brimmed and full.

Still, the hovering Voice unshed,  
And the Vision unbeheld,  
And the mute sky overhead,  
And his longing, still withheld !  
— Even when the two tears welled,  
Salt, upon that lonely bread.

Vaguely blessèd in the leaves,  
Dim-companioned in the sun,

## 54 THE SINGING MAN

Eager mornings, wistful eves,  
Very hunger drew him on ;  
And To-morrow ever shone  
With the glow the sunset weaves.

Even so, to that young heart,  
Words and hands, and Men were dear ;  
And the stir of lane and mart  
After daylong vigil here.  
Sunset called, and he drew near,  
Still to find his path apart.

When the Bell, with gentle tongue,  
Called the herd-bells home again,  
Through the purple shades he swung,  
Down the mountain, through the glen ;  
Towards the sound of fellow-men, —  
Even from the light that clung.

Dimly too, as cloud on cloud,  
Came that silent flock of his :  
Thronging whiteness, in a crowd,  
After homing twos and threes ;  
With the thronging memories  
Of all white things dreamed and vowed.

Through the fragrances, alone,  
By the sudden-silent brook,  
From the open world unknown,  
To the close of speech and book ;  
There to find the foreign look  
In the faces of his own.

Sharing was beyond his skill ;  
Shyly yet, he made essay :  
Sought to dip, and share, and fill  
Heart's-desire, from day to day.  
But their eyes, some foreign way,  
Looked at him ; and he was still.

Last, he reached his arms to sleep,  
Where the Vision waited, dim,  
Still beyond some deep-on-deep.  
And the darkness folded him,  
Eager heart and weary limb. —  
All day long, he kept the sheep.

## THE LONG LANE

**A**LL through the summer night, down  
the long lane in flower,  
The moon-white lane,  
All through the summer night,—dim as a  
shower,  
Glimmer and fade the Twain :  
Over the cricket hosts, throbbing the hour by  
hour,  
Young voices bloom and wane.

Down the long lane they go, and past one  
window, pale  
With visions silver-blurred ;  
Stirring the heart that waits,—the eyes that  
fail  
After a spring deferred.  
Query, and hush, and Ah!—dim through a  
moon-lit veil,  
The same one word.

Down the long lane, entwined with all the fra-  
grance there ;  
The lane in flower somehow

With youth, and plighted hands, and star-strewn  
air,

And muted 'Thee' and 'Thou': —  
All the wild bloom and reach of dreams that  
never were,  
— Never to be, now.

So, in the throbbing dark, where ebbs the old  
refrain,

A starved heart hears.  
And silver-bright, and silver-blurred again  
With moonlight and with tears.  
All the long night they go, down the long sum-  
mer lane,  
The long, long years.



*Ah but, Belovèd, men may do  
All things to music ; — march, and die ;  
And wear the longest vigil through,  
. . . And say good-by.*

*All things to music ! — Ah, but where  
Peace never falls upon the air ; —  
These city-ways of dark and din  
Where greed has shut and barred them in !  
And thundering, swart against the sky,  
That whirlwind, — never to go by —  
Of tracks and wheels, that overhead  
Beat back the senses with their roar  
And menace of undying war, —  
War — war — for daily bread !*

*All things to silence ! Ah, but where  
Men dwell not, but must make a lair ; —  
And Sorrow may not sit alone,  
Nor Love hear music of its own ;  
And Thought that strives to breast that sea  
Must struggle even for memory.  
Day-long, night-long, — besieging din  
To thrust all pain the deeper in ! —  
And drown the flutter of first-breath ;  
And batter at the doors of Death.*

*To lull their dearest : — watch their dead ;  
While the long thunders overhead,  
Gather and break forevermore,  
Eternal tides — eternal War,  
War — war — Bread — bread !*





## ALISON'S MOTHER TO THE BROOK

**B**ROOK, of the listening grass,  
Brook of the sun-fleckt wings,  
Brook of the same wild way and flicker-  
ing spell !

Must you begone? Will you forever pass,  
After so many years and dear to tell? —  
Brook of all hoverings . . .  
Brook that I kneel above ;  
Brook of my love.

Ah, but I have a charm to trouble you ;  
A spell that shall subdue  
Your all-escaping heart, unheedful one  
And unremembering !  
Now, when I make my prayer  
To your wild brightness there  
That will but run and run,  
O mindless Water! —  
Hark, — now will I bring  
A grace as wild, — my little yearling daughter,  
My Alison.

## 62 THE SINGING MAN

Heed well that threat ;  
And tremble for your hill-born liberty  
So bright to see ! —  
Your shadow-dappled way, unthwarted yet,  
And the high hills whence all your dearness  
    bubbled ; —  
You, never to possess !  
For let her dip but once — O fair and fleet, —  
Here in your shallows, yes,  
Here in your silverness  
Her two blithe feet, —  
O Brook of mine, how shall your heart be  
    troubled !

The heart, the bright unmothering heart of you,  
That never knew. —  
(O never, more than mine of long ago.  
How could we know ? —)  
For who should guess  
The shock and smiting of that perfectness ? —  
The lily-thrust of those ecstatic feet  
Unpityingly sweet ? —  
Sweet beyond all the blurred blind dreams that  
    grope  
The upward paths of hope ?  
And who could guess

The dulcet holiness,  
 The lilt and gladness of those jocund feet,  
 Unpityingly sweet?  
 Ah, for your coolness that shall change and  
                   stir

With every glee of her! —  
 Under the fresh amaze  
 That drips and glistens from her wiles and  
                   ways;

When the endearing air  
 That everywhere  
 Must twine and fold and follow her, shall be  
 Rippled to ring on ring of melody, —  
 Music, like shadows from the joy of her,  
 Small starry Reveller! —  
 When from her triumphings, —  
 All frolic wings —  
 There soars beyond the glories of the height,  
 The laugh of her delight!

And it shall sound, until  
 Your heart stand still;  
 Shaken to human sight;  
 Struck through with tears and light;  
 One with the one desire  
 Unto that central Fire

## 64 THE SINGING MAN

Of Love the Sun, whence all we lighted are  
Even from clod to star.

And all your glory, O most swift and sweet! —  
And all your exultation only this ;  
To be the lowly and forgotten kiss  
Beneath those feet.

You that must ever pass, —  
You of the same wild way, —  
The silver-bright good-bye without a look ! —  
You that would never stay,  
For the beseeching grass . . .  
Brook ! —



*You, Four Walls,  
Wall not in my heart !  
When the lovely night-time falls  
All so welcomely,  
Blinding, sweet hearth-fire,  
Light of heart's desire,  
Blind not, blind not me !  
Unto them that weep apart, —  
While you glow, within,  
Wreckt, despairing kin, —  
Dark with misery :  
— Do not blind my heart !*

*You, close Heart !  
Never hide from mine  
Worlds that I divine  
Through thy human dearness.  
O beloved Nearness,  
Hallow all I understand  
With thy hand-in-hand ; —  
All the lights I seek,  
With thy cheek-to-cheek ;  
All the loveliness I loved apart.*

*You, heart's Home ! —  
Wall not in my heart.*





## CANTICLE OF THE BABE

### I

**O**VER the broken world, the dark gone  
by,  
Horror of outcast darkness torn with  
wars;

And timeless agony  
Of the white fire, heaped high by blinded Stars,  
Unfaltering, unaghast ; —  
Out of the midmost Fire  
At last, — at last, —  
A Cry ! . . .  
O darkness' one desire, —  
O darkness, have you heard ? —  
Black Chaos, blindly striving towards the Word?  
— The Cry !

Behold thy conqueror, Death !  
Behold, behold from whom  
It flutters forth, that triumph of First-Breath,  
Victorious one that can but breathe and cling, —  
This pulsing flower, — this weaker than a wing,  
Halcyon thing ! —  
Cradled above unfathomable doom.

## II

Under my feet, O Death,  
 Under my trembling feet !  
 Back, through the gates of hell, now give me  
                   way.

I come. — I bring new Breath !  
 Over the trampled shards of mine own clay,  
 That smoulder still, and burn,  
 Lo, I return !  
 Hail, singing Light that floats  
 Pulsing with chorused motes :—  
 Hail to thee, Sun, that lookest on all lands !  
 And take thou from my weak undying hands,  
 A precious thing, unblemished, undefiled :—  
 Here, on my heart uplift,  
 Behold the Gift, —  
 Thy glory and my glory, and my child !

## III

*(And our eyes were opened; eyes that had been  
                   holden.*

*And I saw the world, and the fruits thereof.  
 And I saw their glories, scarlet-stained and golden,  
                   All a crumbled dust beneath the feet of Love.*



## CANTICLE OF THE BABE 69

*And I saw their dreams, all of nothing  
worth;*

*But a path for Love, for Him to walk above,  
And I saw new heaven, and new earth.)*

### IV

The grass is full of murmurs ;  
The sky is full of wings ;  
The earth is full of breath.  
With voices, choir on choir  
With tongues of fire,  
They sing how Life out-sings —  
Out-numbers Death.

### V

Who are these that fly :  
As doves, and as doves to the windows ?  
Doves, like hovering dreams round Love that  
slumbereth ;  
Silvering clouds blown by,  
Doves and doves to the windows, —  
Warm through the radiant sky their wings beat  
breath.  
They are the world's new-born :  
Doves, doves to the windows !

## 70 THE SINGING MAN

Lighting, as flakes of snow ;  
Lighting, as flakes of flame ;  
Some to the fair sown furrows ;  
Some to the huts and burrows  
Choked of the mire and thorn, —  
Deep in the city's shame.  
Wind-scattered wreaths they go,  
Doves, and doves, to the windows ;  
Some for worshipping arms, to shelter and fold,  
and shrine ;  
Some to be torn and trodden,  
Withered and waste, and sodden ;  
Pitiful, sacred leaves from Life's dishonored vine.

### VI

O Vine of Life, that in these reaching fingers,  
Urges a sunward way !  
Hold here and climb, and halt not, that there  
lingers  
So far outstripped, my halting, wistful clay.  
Make here thy foothold of my rapturous  
heart, —  
Yea, though the tendrils start  
To hold and twine !  
I am the heart that nursed

Thy sunward thirst. -

A little while, a little while, O Vine,

My own and never mine,

Feed thy sweet roots with me

Abundantly.

O wonder-wildness of the pushing Bud

With hunger at the flood,

Climb on, and seek, and spurn.

Let my dull spirit learn

To follow with its longing, as it may,

While thou seek higher day. —

But thou, the reach of my own heart's desire,

Be free as fire !

Still climb and cling ; and so

Outstrip, — outgrow.

O Vine of Life, my own and not my own,

So far am I outgrown !

High as I may, I lift thee, Soul's Desire.

— Lift thou me higher.





*And thou, Wayfaring Woman, whom I meet  
On all the highways,—every brimming street,  
Lady Demeter, is it thou, grown gaunt  
With work and want?  
At last, and with what shamed and stricken eyes,  
I see through thy disguise  
Of drudge and Exile,—even the holy boon  
That silvers yonder in the Harvest-moon;—  
That dimly underglows  
The furrows of thy worn immortal face,  
With mother-grace.*

*O Queen and Burden-bearer, what of those  
To whom thou gavest the lily and the rose  
Of thy far youth? . . . For whom,  
Out of the wondrous loom  
Of thine enduring body, thou didst make  
Garments of beauty, cunningly adorned,  
But only for Death's sake!  
Largess of life, but to lie waste and scorned.—  
Could not such cost of pain,  
Nor daily utmost of thy toil prevail? —  
But they must fade, and pale,  
And wither from thy desolated throne? —*

*And still no Summer give thee back again  
Thine own?*

*Lady of Sorrows,—Mother,—Drudge august,  
Behold me in the dust.*



## GLADNESS

UNTIL my Gladness then I cried :  
    ‘ I will not be denied !  
    Answer me now ; and tell me why  
Thou dost not fall, as a broken star  
Out of the Dark where such things are,  
    And where such bright things die.  
How canst thou, with thy fountain dance  
Shatter clear sight with radiance ? —  
How canst thou reach and soar, and fling,  
Over my heart’s dark shuddering,  
Unearthly lights on everything ?  
What dost thou see ? What dost thou know ? ’  
My Gladness said to me, bowed below,  
‘ Gladness I am : created so.’

‘ And dare’st thou, in my mortal veins  
Sing, with the Spring’s descending rains ?  
While in this hour, and momentarily,  
Forth of myself I look, and see  
Torn treasure of my heart’s Desire ;  
And human glories in the mire,

## 76 THE SINGING MAN

That should make glad some paradise !—  
The childhood strewn in foulest place,  
The girlhood, plundered of its grace ;  
The eyelids shut upon spent eyes  
That never looked upon thy face !  
Answer me, thou, if answer be !’

My Gladness said to me :  
‘ Weep if thou wilt ; yea, weep, and doubt.  
I may not let the Sun go out.’

Then to my Gladness still I cried :  
‘ And how canst thou abide ? —  
Here, where my listening heart must hark  
These sorrows rising from the Dark  
Where still they starve, and strive and die,  
Who bear each heaviest penalty  
Of humanhood ; — nor grasp, nor guess,  
The garment’s hem of happiness ! —  
The spear-wound throbbing in my song,  
It throbs more bitterly than wrong, —  
It burns more wildly than despair, —  
The will to share,  
The will to share !  
Little I knew, — the blind-fold I, —



Joy would become like agony, —  
Like arrows of the Sun in me !

. . . . .  
I hold thee here. I have thee, now, —  
And I am human. But what art thou !’

My Gladness answered me :  
‘ Wayfarer, wilt thou understand ? —  
Follow me on. And keep my hand.’



# THE NIGHTINGALE UNHEARD



## THE NIGHTINGALE UNHEARD

**Y**ES, Nightingale, through all the summer-time  
We followed on, from moon to golden moon ;

From where Salerno day-dreams in the noon,  
And the far rose of Pæstum once did climb.

All the white way beside the girdling blue,  
Through sun-shrill vines and campanile chime,  
We listened ; — from the old year to the new.  
Brown bird, and where were you ?

You, that Ravello lured not, throned on high  
And filled with singing out of sun-burned  
throats !

Nor yet Minore of the flame-sailed boats ;  
Nor yet — of all bird-song should glorify —  
Assisi, Little Portion of the blest,  
Assisi, in the bosom of the sky,  
Where God's own singer thatched his sun-  
ward nest ;  
That little, heavenliest !

## 82 THE SINGING MAN

And north and north, to where the hedge-rows  
are,  
That beckon with white looks an endless  
way;  
Where, through the fair wet silverness of  
May,  
A lamb shines out as sudden as a star,  
Among the cloudy sheep; and green, and  
pale,  
The may-trees reach and glimmer, near or far,  
And the red may-trees wear a shining veil.  
— And still, no nightingale!

The one vain longing, — through all journey-  
ings,  
The one: in every hushed and hearkening  
spot, —  
All the soft-swarmed dark where you were  
not,  
Still longed for! Yes, for sake of dreams and  
wings,  
And wonders, that your own must ever make  
To bower you close, with all hearts' treasurings;  
And for that speech toward which all hearts  
do ache; —  
Even for Music's sake.

## NIGHTINGALE UNHEARD 83

But most, his music whose belovèd name  
Forever writ in water of bright tears,  
Wins to one grave-side even the Roman years,  
That kindle there the hallowed April flame  
Of comfort-breathing violets. By that shrine  
Of Youth, Love, Death, forevermore the same,  
Violets still! — When falls, to leave no sign,  
The arch of Constantine.

.

Most for his sake we dreamed. Tho' not as he,  
From that lone spirit, brimmed with human  
    woe,  
Your song once shook to surging overflow.  
How was it, sovran dweller of the tree,  
His cry, still throbbing in the flooded shell  
Of silence with remembered melody,  
Could draw from you no answer to the spell?  
    — O Voice, O Philomel?

Long time we wondered (and we knew not  
    why): —  
Nor dream, nor prayer, of wayside gladness  
    born,  
Nor vineyards waiting, nor reproachful thorn,  
Nor yet the nested hill-towns set so high  
All the white way beside the girdling blue, —

## 84 THE SINGING MAN

Nor olives, gray against a golden sky,  
    Could serve to wake that rapturous voice of  
    you !

    But the wise silence knew.

O Nightingale unheard ! — Unheard alone,  
    Throughout that woven music of the days  
    From the faint sea-rim to the market-place,  
And ring of hammers on cathedral stone ! —  
    So be it, better so: that there should fail  
For sun-filled ones, one blessed thing unknown.  
    To them, be hid forever, — and all hail !  
    Sing never, Nightingale.

Sing, for the others ! Sing; to some pale cheek  
    Against the window, like a starving flower.  
    Loose, with your singing, one poor pilgrim  
    hour  
Of journey, with some Heart's Desire to seek.  
    Loose, with your singing, captives such as  
    these  
In misery and iron, hearts too meek,  
    For voyage — voyage over dreamful seas  
    To lost Hesperides.

Sing not for free-men. Ah, but sing for whom  
    The walls shut in; and even as eyes that  
    fade,



## NIGHTINGALE UNHEARD 85

The windows take no heed of light nor  
shade,—

The leaves are lost in mutterings of the loom.

Sing near! So in that golden overflowing  
They may forget their wasted human bloom;  
Pay the devouring days their all, unknow-  
ing,—

Reck not of life's bright going!

Sing not for lovers, side by side that hark;

Nor unto parted lovers, save they be

Parted indeed by more than makes the Sea.

Where never hope shall meet—like mounting  
lark—

Far Joy's uprising; and no memories

Abide to star the music-haunted dark:

To them that sit in darkness, such as these,

Pour down, pour down heart's-ease.

Not in kings' gardens. No; but where there  
haunt

The world's forgotten, both of men and  
birds;

The alleys of no hope and of no words,

The hidings where men reap not, though they  
plant;

## 86 THE SINGING MAN

But toil and thirst — so dying and so born ; —  
And toil and thirst to gather to their want,  
From the lean waste, beyond the daylight's  
scorn,  
— To gather grapes of thorn!

. . . . .  
And for those two, your pilgrims without tears,  
Who prayed a largess where there was no  
dearth,  
Forgive it to their human-happy ears :  
Forgive it them, brown music of the Earth,  
Unknowing, — though the wiser silence knew!  
Forgive it to the music of the spheres  
That while they walked together so, the Two  
Together, — heard not you.

## ENVOI

*Belovèd, till the day break,  
Leave wide the little door ;  
And bless, to lack and longing,  
Our brimming more-and-more.*

*Is love a scantèd portion,  
That we should board thereof? —  
Oh, call unto the deserts,  
Belovèd and my Love!*



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